

the committee substitute, as amended, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no further intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2610) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted and Proposed.")

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 2657), as amended, was passed.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to thank my colleagues for supporting and passing the "District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001," which my friend and colleague, Senator LANDRIEU, and I introduced earlier this summer. Our bill is aimed at guiding the District, as the Superior Court strives to reform its role in the child welfare system through its creation of a Family Court. This is a good bill, an important bill. It will have a significant impact on children and families throughout the District of Columbia.

Just last week, by passing the fiscal year 2002 District of Columbia Appropriations bill, the Senate took a major step toward fundamentally changing the direction of what we are doing in the District regarding its child welfare system. Passage of that bill, while significant, was just the beginning of our work, not the end. As Chair and Ranking Member of the District of Columbia Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator LANDRIEU and I made sure that the appropriations bill made a sizeable and sound investment in the District's court system. However, the bill we are passing today, through the creation of a new family court structure, actually outlines the essential, institutional changes necessary to achieve long-term reform and improvement in the District's ability to protect its children.

We need fundamental reforms, because, quite frankly, the District's child welfare system is a mess. This is nothing new. We have seen articles repeatedly in the Washington Post, that paint a very disturbing picture of the kinds of atrocities that children in the District of Columbia court system have faced. For example, a recent Post series outlined multiple mistakes made by the District of Columbia Government by placing children in unsafe homes or institutions. Unfortunately, these same mistakes occur in the child welfare system throughout our country. Here in Washington, though, these mistakes resulted in over 180 deaths of children in foster care since 1993, 40 of whom died as a direct result of govern-

ment workers' failure to take key preventative actions or because they placed children in unsafe homes or institutions.

Again just last week, the Post ran a story about deficiencies in District's child services. According to this story, "nearly 80 percent of the District's child abuse complaints were not investigated within 30 days and close to two-thirds of foster homes housing city children were unlicensed this year," a study reported. The article continues: "Among the reports' findings, 30 percent of the children under District care were not visited by social workers during their first 8 weeks in foster care. Thirty-seven percent of child neglect complaints were not investigated within 30 days after they came into the city's hotline. Abuse and neglect cases are required to be investigated within a 30-day period."

Stories like this, have been running for years in the District of Columbia. What is happening here in America's capital, is a national tragedy. I realize that no child welfare system is perfect. Each one of us representing our respective States has seen problems in our home States, but what we see in the District of Columbia is an absolute outright scandal.

Since being appointed to the District of Columbia Appropriations Committee, I have made it my personal mission to find financial solutions for the problems facing District of Columbia's foster children. In March, we laid the groundwork for a District of Columbia Family Court Bill that would be bipartisan and effective. In drafting this bill, we have held numerous hearings, met with child welfare advocates from across the District, and had countless meetings with the District of Columbia Superior Court Judges.

The bill we are now passing today includes a number of important reforms that would ensure that the judicial system protects the children of the District. First, it increases the length of judicial terms for judges from 1 year for judges already presiding over the Superior Court to 3 years. New judges appointed to the Superior Court and then assigned to the Family Court will have 5-year terms. This change enables judges to develop an expertise in Family Law.

Second, our bill creates magistrates so that the current backlog of 4,500 permanency cases can be properly and adequately addressed. These magistrates will be distributed among the judges according to a transition plan, which must be submitted to Congress within 90 days of passage of this bill. We want to make sure the court has the flexibility to deal with these important child welfare issues.

Third, the bill provides the resources for an Integrated Judicial Information System, IJIS. This will enable the court to track and properly monitor

family cases and will allow all judges and magistrates to have access to the information necessary to make the best decisions about placement and child safety.

Fourth, a reform in the bill that I find extremely important is the One-Judge/One Family provision. This policy will ensure that the same judge, a judge who knows the history of a family and the child, will be making the important permanency decisions. This provision is essential for those hard cases involving abuse and neglect. It ensures consistency. It ensures safety. And, it just makes sense.

Ultimately, our bill will help provide consistency through the One-Judge/One-Family provision. It will help increase safety and security, and it will help instill stability for the children of the District. We need to give the children in the District's welfare system all of these things. It is the right thing to do.

We must never, ever lose sight of our responsibility to the children involved. Their needs and their best interests must always come first. And today, I believe we are putting children first and taking a huge step forward on their behalf.

AUTHORIZING REPRESENTATION BY SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of a resolution submitted earlier today by the majority and Republican leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 192) to authorize representation by the Senate Legal Counsel in *Judith Lewis v. Rick Perry, et al.*

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this resolution concerns a civil action commenced in the District Court for Dallas County, Texas. The lawsuit, filed by a pro se plaintiff, names Texas Governor Rick Perry and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON as defendants. While the allegations in the complaint are not clear, the plaintiff appears to call for the impeachment of the defendants by the Texas state courts because of some unspecified, official action. This resolution authorizes the Senate Legal Counsel to represent Senator HUTCHISON in this suit.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 192) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The text of the resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")